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# The Hemingway Patrols: Ernest Hemingway and His Hunt for U-boats

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of Pingxingguan Pass, which took place in Chahar. The Burmese map shows fewer than half the important locations discussed and no indications of the Burma Road, for which the forces were fighting. The Japanese province of Kyūshū was certainly an important place for recruiting, but one will have to look elsewhere to find its location. The political instability of the period exacerbates the situation in terms of geography. Many locations have Japanese, Chinese, and European names. For instance, the Japanese refer to Tianjin, near the city of Peking (modern-day Beijing), as Tientsin. This situation is compounded by the fact that provincial boundaries and place-names of what we now call China, especially in the north, changed frequently in the mid-twentieth century. Although the political and geographic landscapes of the Sino-Japanese War admittedly pose a challenge, the maps could have better illustrated the events described.

As I am not certain that Chinese or Japanese audiences (those most interested in this topic) will gravitate to this English work, *The Battle for China* must be presumed to target a small niche market of Sino-Japanese War military history enthusiasts in North America and Europe. To offset what may be limited interest in its subject, I feel compelled to praise in the strongest terms the efforts of Peattie, Drea, and Van de Ven in organizing, editing, translating, and publishing this important book. Without these distinguished professionals, Western students of the Pacific War would not have access to this important Chinese and Japanese research, mediated by celebrated Western scholars. *The Battle for China* is a rare treasure that will likely renew interest in an

underdeveloped field of Western scholarship. I highly recommend it to those interested in the Pacific War or greater insight into modern Chinese history.

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*U.S. Special Operations Command*



Mort, Terry. *The Hemingway Patrols: Ernest Hemingway and His Hunt for U-boats*. New York: Scribner's, 2009. 272pp. \$26

The Battle of the Atlantic has been thoroughly researched and exhaustively studied, especially by students attending the Naval War College. However, rarely has the epic campaign to defeat the German U-boat menace been viewed through the lens of the life and personality of one of America's greatest literary figures. In *The Hemingway Patrols*, Terry Mort offers a well researched account of this great campaign, one that reads almost like an actual Hemingway novel.

For students of military history, Mort's account of the titanic struggle between the Allied navies and German U-boats in the early months of 1942 will be somewhat familiar. It is the juxtaposition with Hemingway's decision to participate in the campaign that provides the strength of this narrative. Mort depicts Hemingway in 1942 as at the zenith of both his life and his professional career. Likewise, the German U-boat campaign would reach its zenith during this year: American shipping suffered grievous losses at the hands of only a dozen or so U-boats in the early months. Why would Hemingway, living in luxury in Cuba at the time, risk everything, with his drinking buddies, to hunt U-boats in his wooden fishing trawl

*Pilar*? Having studied at Princeton with Hemingway biographer Carlos Baker, Mort provides one of the most convincing explanations yet offered for Hemingway's decision to place himself in harm's way.

It would be easy simply to ascribe Hemingway's decision to that of a writer living out the life that he had illustrated in his art. Mort takes a more scholarly approach, however. One of the most interesting elements of this book is its description of the three stages through which each of Hemingway's characters pass in his novels—the stage of innocence, then suffering, and finally an existential stage, in which the hero creates meaning out of nothingness. It is certainly possible to see Hemingway himself following this trajectory. In the imaginative mind of a writer, the U-boat appeared as a multifaceted menace, not only a threat to merchant vessels but a stealthy craft that could deliver spies to the many coves and inlets of Caribbean islands like Cuba. Hunting down and attacking these modern weapons of war would require a dedicated band of ardent antifascists, the likes of whom Hemingway had consorted with in Spain in the late thirties, and whom he would lead into action again, as his small fishing vessel sought valiantly for the elusive U-boats throughout the Caribbean and the Gulf of Mexico. Many elements of Hemingway's complex personality combined to compel him to sail *Pilar* into action, and Mort gives each of these factors due treatment.

A former naval officer himself, Mort is familiar with life at sea. The many accounts of Hemingway leading his crew on these dangerous missions benefit from Mort's having participated in

patrols in some of the same waters. In summing up this work, one phrase stands above the rest as a testament to the sweeping panorama of Mort's ambitious attempt to tie together a great naval campaign and the life of an American literary giant: "It was action and artistry combined. It was also fun, most of the time, especially when there was enough gin." Mort has provided us with a fascinating book, and students of both military and literary history will definitely want to put *The Hemingway Patrols* on their reading list.

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Stoker, Donald. *The Grand Design: Strategy and the U.S. Civil War*. New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2010. 498pp. \$27.95

It is difficult to imagine historical ground that has been more thoroughly mined than that of the American Civil War. Biographies, battle studies, sweeping histories, and all manner of specialized analyses dot the literary landscape. However, rather than turning away from a potentially saturated market, our collective interest in this sanguinary conflict has kept publishers and authors delivering a steady stream of material year after year after year.

It is nonetheless a brave author who claims to offer something truly original to our understanding of the war. Although some scholars may quibble over whether or not Stoker has succeeded in this effort, his *Grand Design*, a one-volume history that examines the role of strategy in the Civil War, is something of a *rara avis*. More to the point,